

Remarks

Claims 1-25 were pending. Claims 2-6, 9-12, 20, and 25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 17, 18, 21, and 24 are amended. Claim 26 has been added. Support for the amendments and new claim can be found in the specification, *inter alia*, at page 9, lines 23-24, and the original claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. Claims 1, 7, 8, 13-19, 21-24, and 26 are now pending.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 3, 10, 17 and 20-23 contain allowable subject matter.

Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and passage of the claims to allowance.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1-2, 4-9, 11-12, 15-16, 18-19 and 24-25 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hay et al (US Pat. No. 6,278,811). Applicants respond as follows.

Without acquiescing to the propriety of the rejections, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 24 to include the feature(s) of original claim 3 and claim 18 to include the feature(s) of original claim 20. Specifically, independent claims 1 and 24 recite “a controlled bending force” and independent claim 18 recites “a bending moment applicator to bend the support member.” Claim 25 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering that rejection moot. Claims 17 and 21 were amended for antecedent basis purposes.

In addition, claim 26 was added to recite the feature(s) of original claim 17, in independent form.

For at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over the cited art. In summary, the rejection of claims 1-2, 4-9, 11-12, 15-16, 18-19 and 24-25 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hay et al has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 13-14 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hay et al.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over the cited art.


Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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